



Contact tracing is critical to Tennessee's COVID-19 response efforts.

Contact tracing slows the spread of infectious disease by gathering information from COVID-19 cases, notifying close contacts, and monitoring symptoms of cases and contacts during their isolation or quarantine period.

To assist with effective contact tracing and slow the spread of COVID-19:

Be Prepared

- Educate staff on COVID-19 symptoms:
 - Cough
 - Chills
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Nausea/vomiting
 - Fever
 - Muscle pain
 - Diarrhea
 - Runny nose/congestion
 - Headache
 - Fatigue
 - Sore throat
- Though cases are encouraged to notify their employer of their illness directly, they are not required to do so.
- Identify a point-of-contact or team for staff to notify if they are diagnosed with COVID-19. This point-of-contact or team can work with the health department to identify and notify other staff who may have had close contact with the case.

Work With the Health Department

The [local or regional health department](#) will conduct a case investigation to identify anyone who came into close contact with the case (within 6 ft or less for 15 minutes or more) and notify them of their exposure. Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes. However, this depends on the exposure level and setting. The final decision on what constitutes close contact is made at the discretion of public health.

- Close contacts must be quarantined at home according to [Tennessee Department of Health's guidelines](#) following their exposure to the case.
- Close contacts will be monitored by public health by regular phone calls.
- Depending on the structure of the office, the health department may need your assistance in identifying and notifying close contacts of the case in the workplace. Public health will protect the patient's confidentiality and will only share information necessary to inform the investigation and prevent others from getting sick.

Maintain Confidentiality

- If an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, but must maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Employers should never divulge the name of an infected employee to others at the workplace beyond those conducting the investigation.

Keep Employees Safe

- Consider [prevention measures](#) like virtual meetings or staggered shifts to reduce potential exposures.
- Encourage employees to follow any new policies or procedures related to illness, cleaning and disinfecting, and work meetings and travel.
- Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs. Dirty surfaces can be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. To disinfect, use [products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2](#), the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.
- While mask wearing is our best practice for prevention, it does **not** change someone's status for whether or not they are a close contact (within 6 feet for 15 or more minutes to a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case during the 14 days before or after illness onset).

*Note, critical infrastructure employees may continue working following exposure, if certain recommendations can be implemented. More information about identifying critical infrastructure employees and recommendations can be found [here](#).